

## Our Fearless Leader Is Neither Fearless Nor A Leader

Before leaving for his Martha's Vineyard vacation this morning, Obama commented on the situation in Iraq—with the Marine One helicopter impatiently waiting behind him, with golf clubs no doubt already stowed on board.

In his brief comments Obama gave no timetable for military actions in Iraq and he did not define his goals—if he even has any beyond shifting the slaughter of innocent Yazidis off the front pages of a few newspapers for a few days.

Obama called on the Iraqis to do more to defend themselves: “What we’ve seen over the last several months indicates the weaknesses in the Iraqi government, but what we’ve also seen is a wake-up call for a lot of Iraqis.” Obama neglects to note that it is also a wake-up call for his own administration, which was warned about ISIS more than a year ago and chose to do nothing in the hopes that it would perhaps just go away.

Obama emphasized that no U.S. combat troops will be deployed, yet calls the Iraq situation a long term project: “I don’t think we’re going to solve this problem in weeks. I think this is going to take some time.” He did not indicate *how* the problem will be solved, only that it will be magically solved without any U.S. combat troops.

Obama *falsely* claimed that all U.S. troops were pulled out because the Iraqis demanded it, and claimed the rise of ISIS was unanticipated: ISIS actions were “more rapid than the intelligence estimates.” (In other words, “Don’t blame me, blame the U.S. intelligence agencies.”)

Obama failed to take *any* responsibility for the ISIS problem, saying it was wrong to blame a lack of U.S. troops: “That entire analysis is bogus and is wrong. But it gets frequently peddled around here by folks who often times are trying to defend previous policies that they themselves made.”

Obama stated, “We feel confident we can prevent ISIL [ISIS] from going up the mountain and slaughtering people who are there.” The problem, of course, is greater than simply the thousands of Iraqis stranded on a mountain. The problem is that ISIS not only threatens tens of thousands of Iraqis, it threatens the stability of the entire region. (Note that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, was released from U.S. custody at the Camp Bucca prisoner facility in 2009. On June 13 Kenneth King, who was the commanding officer at Camp Bucca, told *The Kelly File*’s Megyn Kelly that when al-Baghdadi was transferred to the Iraqis he said, “I’ll see you in New York.”) But even if ISIS is ultimately a threat to the United States, Obama will wash his hands of all the problems as soon as the people trapped on the mountain in Sinjar are rescued. Iraqis who are being persecuted and slaughtered by ISIS everywhere else in Iraq apparently have to fend for themselves.

Remarkably, Obama said, “I find interesting the degree to which this issue keeps coming up, *as if this was my decision* [emphasis added]. Under the previous administration, we had turned over the country to a sovereign, democratically elected Iraqi government. In order for us to maintain troops in Iraq, we needed the invitation of the Iraqi government and we needed assurances that our personnel would be immune from prosecution. ...Let’s just be clear. The reason we did not have a follow-on force in Iraq was because a majority of Iraqis did not want U.S. troops there.”

*Obama’s statement is as shameless as it is astounding.* He spent much of his 2012 reelection campaign bragging that *he* ended the war in Iraq, but he *now* claims he had nothing to do with the troop withdrawal because George W. Bush had failed to negotiate a status of forces agreement and because Iraq did not want it to be continued. *Obama’s claim is absurd.* Although Iraq made some demands for inclusion in a renewal agreement, they could easily have been overcome or negotiated by Obama. The Iraqi government was simply trying to negotiate the best deal it could get from Obama—no doubt believing his negotiating skills were weaker than Bush’s. (On March 24, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told *On the Record’s* Greta Van Susteren, “A trained ape can get a status of forces agreement. It does not take a genius.”) Obama cannot claim that he ended the war *and* also mockingly say, “*as if this was my decision.*” It was either his decision to withdraw all U.S. troops or it was not. If it was, it was a mistake. If it was not, then he did not end the war. There is no middle ground which would allow him to claim credit for the good and avoid blame for the bad.

Obama did not even *bother* to try to negotiate a new agreement. He simply used the Iraqi demands as his excuse not to leave *any* U.S. troops behind in Iraq. But he cannot have it both ways. Obama cannot take credit for ending the Iraq war *and at the same time* claim that his hands were tied and he could not have done anything to change the course of events! Obama either could have done something or he could not. If Obama could *not* have done anything, then he most certainly did not “end the war.” *It ended merely because the previous status of forces agreement of the Bush administration lapsed.* If Obama *could* have done something, then he deserves some of the blame for the rise of ISIS and the current crisis in Iraq—which could have been avoided had U.S. troops been left behind to stop ISIS before it had a chance to grow into a massive terrorist army.

Obama provides himself with yet another excuse: “The only difference would be [that] we’d have a bunch of troops on the ground that would be vulnerable. However many troops we had, we would have to now be reinforcing, I’d have to be protecting them, and we’d have a much bigger job. And probably we would end up having to go up again in terms of the number of ground troops to make sure that those forces were not vulnerable.” In other words, if Obama had left any U.S. troops behind in Iraq, they would not have been enough to deal with ISIS and we would now have to reinforce them anyway. But *had* he left any troops behind, the number would have been determined by *him*. Obama is essentially arguing that *he* would have erred by leaving too few troops behind to deal with ISIS. His argument is therefore, “I would have erred by leaving too few troops behind had I left any, so I may as well have left none.” Obama’s logic is astoundingly pathetic. The number of U.S. troops the Iraqi government wanted left

behind—and the number recommended by U.S. generals—would have been enough to stop ISIS had action been taken at the earliest stages, *when it was requested by the Iraqi government*. The U.S. troops on the ground would have been able to identify the ISIS targets, and missile strikes would have decimated them—*before* ISIS grew to army size.

Obama's choice of words is worth noting: "*we'd* have a bunch of troops," "*we* would have to now be reinforcing," "*I'd* have to be protecting them," "*we'd* have a much bigger job," and "*we* would end up having to go up again." His use of "*I'd*" in only one part of the statement is a clear indication that he *personally* resents having to "protect" U.S. troops in Iraq. He wanted then and wants now to have nothing to do with Iraq, and he is personally offended that he is being forced into a position where he has to even think about the situation. (*"How dare anyone force the challenges of leadership on me!"*)

Obama then said, "If you [*you*," not "*we*"—meaning, "*How dare you* delay my vacation!"] want this thing to work, then whether it's different ethnicities, different religions, different regions, they've got to accommodate each other. Otherwise you start tipping back into the old patterns of violence, and it doesn't matter how many U.S. troops are there if that happens. You end up having a mess." Obama's statement is *incredibly* naive and assumes there is no evil in the world—just "differences" that can be "accommodated." But jihadists in ISIS, Hamas, Hezbollah, and al-Qaeda will not "accommodate" anyone. They demand that *they* be accommodated, and a violent death is rapidly dispensed to those who will not comply.

Obama's "*Can't we all just get along?*" position would be naive coming from an average person who is busy earning a living and not following world events. *But it is coming from the commander-in-chief of the U.S. armed forces!* That outlook may cause little harm if it is that of the neighborhood bartender or philosophical taxi driver (or MSNBC pundit). But when that outlook is coming from the so-called leader of the free world, that free world may be in grave danger.

Our fearless leader is neither fearless nor a leader. Be very afraid...

*Don Fredrick*  
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